

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1054

By Black

A RESOLUTION to urge the Department of Human Services to fund the Prevent Blindness Tennessee program.

WHEREAS, the General Assembly takes notice of the fact that in Tennessee more than 200,000 people over age 40 are blind; 65,000 are vision impaired; 413,000 have cataracts; 45,000 have glaucoma; 107,000 experience diabetic retinopathy; and 32,000 have age-related macular degeneration; and

WHEREAS, vision loss robs people of their mobility, independence, and quality of life and costs taxpayers an estimated \$4 billion annually; while there are no cures for these eye disorders, there are lifestyle changes that can reduce some of the risks of developing cataracts and diabetic retinopathy; and

WHEREAS, Prevent Blindness Tennessee has been providing services in Tennessee for almost 30 years; their services include free screenings of children and seniors, eye referral to physicians for examinations, administration of eye examinations from volunteer physicians, and the provision of eyeglasses and prevention education to the underserved and indigent; and

WHEREAS, Prevent Blindness Tennessee lists their major objectives as follows: early detection of at risk adults; more education to increase public awareness; increase visibility of their programs at the state and local levels; serve the underserved, especially in historically poor, rural areas that have little or no access to eye care services; increase prevention of unnecessary vision loss; and ensure follow-up for those individuals screened by the program who need additional vision care; and

WHEREAS, the outstanding services provided by Prevent Blindness Tennessee may be curtailed due to an elimination of funding from the Centers for Disease Control and a one-time grant from the State of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative to the success of the State of Tennessee, and hence the economy of the state and the total welfare of its people, that the State of Tennessee make available adequate funding to support the exemplary services provided by Prevent Blindness Tennessee; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby urge the Department of Human Services to provide funding for Prevent Blindness Tennessee, so that they may continue to provide blindness prevention awareness education and screenings to the citizens of the State of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Commissioner of the Department of Human Services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.